

SB 970 an Act Concerning The Taxation Of Golf Courses.

As the First Selectman of the Town of Oxford, I would like to express my opposition to this bill. Oxford has an 18 hole golf course located as part of an over 55 community. It is a public course which is located centrally in that community. In fact, one of the conditions of approval for that development was that the golf course be maintained as a golf course. As a golfer, I have played that course on several occasions. Like most golf Courses, it is surrounded by many high end housing units. These housing units were sold because of the proximity to a golf course not the availability of open space.

I am opposed to a bill that would require municipalities to adopt a new assessment classification for golf courses. As Proposed, It appears that the bill would change assessment value from the current value to that of open space land. Currently the land at Oxford Greens is assessed at 1,158,080. If the land was classified as open space, the assessment would be greatly reduced and the corresponding taxes would be reduced by the same percentage. The owners of the golf course would see a financial windfall and their good fortune would be borne on the backs of the municipal taxpayer.

I have played golf on most of the courses in Connecticut and I don't understand why anyone would feel that they are conducive to open space. The sand traps. Water hazards and cart paths are not compatible with a natural environment. If a golf course is allowed to go fallow, it is more of an eye sore than a natural wonder.

Oxford, like most towns in Connecticut is proud of its record in the preservation of open space. Right now the town owns 16 % of all the land in Oxford. This does not include the land managed by the Oxford Land Trust. We have recently received a bequest for one million dollars that is ear marked to purchase more open space land. We will continue to add on to our total open space. We really don't need your help in this area.

In conclusion, I oppose enactment of this bill. I don't think it serves any meaningful public purpose and will only result in very rich people getting richer at the expense of the municipal taxpayer.

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First Selectman, Town of Oxford

